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OCI No. 1130/66

(45)

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
4 April 1966

## INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam  
(Information as of 10:00 P.M. EST)

1. The situation in the Da Nang area is still fluid, but there has as yet been no confrontation between the troops flown in from Saigon and anti-government elements in the area. The two Vietnamese Marine battalions which were airlifted today (during the night of 4/5 April Saigon time) are still at Da Nang air base, where they have stated that their mission is to defend the Vietnamese (northeast) section of the airfield--toward the town--against any attempt to seize it.

2. The third battalion of Vietnamese Marines to be transported from Saigon has now begun to move by daylight in Vietnamese Air Force C-47 Dakota's, for Da Nang. This air movement is expected to take all day. In addition, one Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) Company was to move the 11th Ranger Battalion from nearby to Da Nang, and another APC Company will move south from Hue to the Da Nang area, presumably with elements of the 37th Ranger Battalion. A late report states that 14 APC's have moved toward Da Nang from the north, and 14 from the south. It is presently assumed that these are scheduled friendly movements.

3. An uncertain factor in the situation is the reported movement into the Da Nang area of the 3rd Battalion of the 51st Vietnamese Army regiment, which had reportedly been south of the city. This unit reportedly has reached the I Corps Headquarters compound. Available maps of the Da Nang area show the compound near the air base, some distance from the center of town, but the I Corps headquarters may have relocated with the introduction of the US III Marine Amphibious Forces. There has been no report of the scheduled movement of this unit, and its loyalty is unknown.

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4. Premier Ky reportedly has now arrived at Da Nang airfield, presumably to take charge of the operations.

5. Foreign correspondents driving between Da Nang airfield and the town have reported that the road is strewn with roadblocks, backed by machine guns which are manned by both troops and Buddhist civilians. One correspondent who reports that he was stopped three times yesterday and forced to identify himself, also reported gangs of 15-20 men roaming Da Nang city armed with clubs and rocks. At present, there is no information on whether or when Vietnamese troops from Saigon may attempt to enter the city proper.

6. There are no new reports of disorders elsewhere in South Vietnam. Saigon was reported quiet following some disturbances earlier in the day.

7. A six-battalion operation under the control of the South Vietnamese Army's 7th Division (IV Corps) is underway in the vicinity of Saigon. US advisers with this group were told by their Vietnamese military counterparts to "make themselves scarce" if the ARVN battalions were moved to Saigon. Presumably, the ARVN troops are those tasked with furnishing extra security to the capital if necessary.

8. US military personnel continue on full-scale alert at Da Nang and Saigon airfields. No steps to evacuate civilians and isolated military advisers in the Da Nang area have been reported, although the III MAF has units on alert to provide protection and/or evacuation if requested. According to MACV, Da Nang Main airstrip is fully operational, and is being used by US aircraft to support ground operations.

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OCI No. 1129/66

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
4 April 1966

## INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam  
(As of 2:30 P.M. EST)

1. The airlift of two Vietnamese marine battalions, the 2nd and 3rd, from Saigon to Da Nang was due to have been completed by 2:00 P.M. EST (3:00 A.M. 5 April in Saigon). The first US C-130 Hercules transport to depart Tan Son Nhut air base near Saigon left at 7:10 A.M. EST, reaching Da Nang at 9:06 A.M. Aircraft have been shuttling between Saigon and Da Nang with a 15-minute unloading time at Da Nang.

2. The combined strength of the two marine battalions now moved is 1,300 men. The remaining battalion to be moved is the 1st Vietnamese marine battalion, with a strength of 620 men. It will be transported by South Vietnamese air force planes.

3. There are unconfirmed press reports that troops from the city of Da Nang have been laying roadblocks between the airport and the town, with machineguns set up facing the airport. There has been no report so far of ground movements toward the city by the newly landed marines. There are reports from the US consulate that armed cadres from the Nationalist (VNQDD) Party have been leaving the Quang Nam Province capital of Hoi An for Da Nang. So far, 100 men carrying the VNQDD banner have reportedly arrived in Da Nang, but no incidents have been reported. Although the VNQDD is factionalized and the loyalties of these cadres are not known, a report from General Chieu, the Directorate member recently detained in Hue, indicates that he had been trying to line up the VNQDD as a counterforce to the "struggle" groups.

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4. According to a broadcast from Hue, the Da Nang radio was damaged and put off the air today by the station director and his personnel, who departed for Saigon declaring that they could not work in the present atmosphere and would not work with the struggle forces. This is confirmed by the US Embassy. The mayor held a press conference today and declared that the people in the city would "stand up for what was right." Da Nang otherwise remained superficially quiet through evening today.

5. The march of some 4,000 students in Hue to the US consulate dispersed peacefully after students read a declaration demanding an end to US "interference" which was then presented to the consulate as a petition. As a result of reports that struggle groups might attempt to take control of the Voice of Freedom transmitter operated by the US in Hue, the radio has been disabled at consular instruction. Hue is apparently now calm.

6. The earlier reported demonstrations in Saigon by unruly student groups appear to have been dispersed. One US military jeep was burned by the crowd, but no injuries resulted. A student demonstration reportedly is planned for tomorrow, following a meeting at Saigon University under the auspices of an "Interfaculty Student Committee" and the "Youth and Student Council for the Protection of the People." There is still no evidence that the major student organization at the university is participating.

7. The situation in Dalat is still uneasy. There have been false rumors afloat that three persons were killed in last night's demonstration, and local authorities fear that there may be riots or looting tonight. American dependents in the town have been evacuated, and all US troops and remaining civilians have been moved to a guarded US military billet. Today, a crowd of 500, led by six Buddhist monks, forced the Tuyen Duc Province chief to sign a paper taking responsibility for any arrests carried out. The radio reportedly is in the hands of the police.

8. The situation in Nha Trang, in Khanh Hoa Province, has eased since this morning, as martial law and the presence of disciplined troops (four battalions of airborne and ranger troops) made itself felt. There is still some milling about the town and the Information Service is still in antigovernment hands.

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9. The Embassy's political conselor, who saw General Chieu today, reports that Chieu described the breakdown of law and order in Hue as "astonishing," Chieu felt, however, that the "struggle" movement was well-organized and well-disciplined, with its leadership in the Buddhist pagodas and among lay Buddhists including those at Hue University. Chieu feels that there is some "invisible Communist involvement" in the leadership, and described Tri Quang as "dishonest and shifty." Chieu also indicated that there is considerable pressure on General Thi to join forces with the "struggle," but he believes that Thi is still maintaining his independence. Chieu appeared highly nervous, and voiced concern that the use of force in I Corps might lead to "bloodshed."

10. The press today quotes General Thi as saying that the use of force against Da Nang is a mistake, and that if troops are sent to Hue, he will urge the people to stand up and fight.

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OCI No. 1128/66

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
4 April 1966

## INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam  
(As of 11:00 A.M. EST)

1. The Ky government's operation to reassert its authority in the Da Nang area of I Corps is now underway. According to MACV, one Vietnamese marine battalion has already been moved from Saigon to Da Nang by six USAF C-130 Hercules transport aircraft. The identity of this battalion is not yet known, but plans called for the movement of both the 2nd and 3rd Vietnamese marine battalions to Da Nang by 5:00 PM EST today (6:00 A.M. Saigon time on 5 April). An additional government battalion will move from Saigon to Da Nang during the next 24 hours. These units are not accompanied by US advisers.

2. To replace the marine battalions moving out of Saigon to Da Nang, one or two Vietnamese battalions, still unidentified, are being moved to Saigon from the III Corps area around the capital. A full regiment from the IV Corps tactical zone in the delta has been ordered to be prepared for movement to Saigon. South Vietnamese air force units at Tan Son Nhut airport, near the capital, are confined to billets, but are on 100 per cent alert. A leaflet drop over the Da Nang area is scheduled to take place before the arrival of the second marine battalion, but it is not clear whether this will be conducted by Vietnamese or US aircraft. Generally, US personnel in South Vietnam, both military and civilian, are being told to limit their movements to the conduct of essential business and to avoid public places.

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3. There is as yet no report of the reaction in Da Nang to the arrival of the first marine battalion.

Da Nang was reported free of demonstrations today. Mayor Nguyen Van Man, in an interview with a US correspondent, denied all charges made against him by Ky yesterday. He declared that he would not "run into the hills" but would remain in Da Nang as mayor and would trust the "people" to defend him from Premier Ky's troops.

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[redacted] an "Anti-Communist Front for the Defense of Freedom" will be established tomorrow in Da Nang. The purpose of this apparently pro-government group will be to rid the city of Communist influences and of weak local officials. The front will, however, support local demands for an elected civilian government.

4. For the past 24 hours, the "Popular Struggle Force" in the Hue area has been issuing vehement statements over the local radio, declaring that the people and armed forces in Da Nang were alerted to cope with Ky's act of suppression. The radio has also warned that the people and troops in Hue were similarly prepared to deal with the introduction of troops there, and has alleged that struggle forces are in control of Phu Bai airport. This is not confirmed. Hue Radio has also strongly denounced the US for allegedly ordering and supporting the government's move. A small group of demonstrators in Hue this morning marched to the US consulate to present a petition, but no further details are available.

5. According to press reports, crowds of Buddhist student demonstrators numbering from 500-2,000 were active in the streets of Saigon during the evening of 4 April (Saigon time). The city radio station, the US Embassy, and a US officers billet were among the installations converged upon by various unruly groups; however, National Police were reported to have the situation under control. The military reinforcement from III and IV Corps are now in the process of being moved into Saigon.

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6. Some 200 National Police were flown from Saigon to Da Lat early this morning (Saigon time) to bolster wavering local authority there, but were unable to contain some 1,000 student demonstrators. The municipal radio station and adjoining hotel reportedly suffered some damage from fire during the incident. US Embassy observers in Da Lat doubt that local officials will be able to regain full control of the situation in the near future.

7. The city of Nha Trang also in II Corps, was reported to be under martial law today, with four South Vietnamese ranger battalions deployed at strategic points throughout the city.

8. Chief of State General Thieu has issued a radio appeal for an end to demonstrations, and has announced the indefinite closure of all schools and universities.

9. There are continuing reports of efforts by Viet Cong "municipal committees" in such areas as Da Nang, Qui Nhon, and other northern towns to infiltrate the "struggle groups" and exploit the current unrest with anti-government and anti-American propaganda. Although the organization, techniques, and anti-American overtones of the current campaign bear strong similarities to those of the Communists, there is still no firm evidence that militant leaders of the Buddhist hierarchy, such as Tri Quang, are under Communist discipline.

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